

Pennington County Resource Advisory Committee Meeting

Date May 10, 2011

Time 5:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Location Mystic Ranger District Office
8221 South Highway 16
Rapid City, South Dakota 57702

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This was the second meeting of the Pennington County Resource Advisory Committee.

RAC Members present – Don Hausle, Danielle Wiebers, Patty Brown, Ken Edel, Carson Engelskirger, Patrick Brondos, Jim Glines, Jerry Cole, Skip Tillisch, Deb Black, Ervin Berg, Dan Conrad, Lori Litzen, Michael Verchio

RAC Members not present - Dirk Gustin, Quintin LaGrande

Forest Service – Robert J. Thompson, Lisa Sanders, Dave Graham, Lou Conroy

Public - none

Other - none

Agenda:

- Grants, Agreements, Partnerships, and Budget Processes – 3 ways to implement projects approved by a RAC.
 - Forest Service implements the project using their work force (Force Account).
 - Forest Service can utilize funds for a contract issued by the Forest Service.
 - The Cooperator through an executed agreement with the Forest Service may be reimbursed by the funds for work performed.

There are 4 types of “instruments” that can be used for transferring money which fall under two categories. Determination on which instrument to use depends on the type of work to be performed and the involvement of the Forest Service. The first category is Partnership Agreements: 2 types of Partnership Agreements that can be used under the Secure Rural Schools Act are Challenge Cost Share Agreement and Participating Agreement. The second category is Grants and Cooperative Agreements. Only “real costs” can be reimbursed. Examples are: salary, contract costs, etc. All Grants and Agreements are done on a reimbursable basis. All Cooperators who enter into an agreement must have a Tax ID number, Duns Number and be registered in the CCR (Central Contractor Registration). All funds must be obligated by end of Fiscal Year 2012 (September 30, 2012) with work accomplished by Fiscal Year 2013.

Types of work permissible under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act include, but are not limited to –

- Road, trail and infrastructure maintenance or obliteration
- Soil productivity improvement
- Improvements in forest ecosystem health
- Watershed restoration and maintenance
- Restoration, maintenance and improvement of wildlife & fish habitat
- Control of noxious and exotic weeds

- Re-establishment of native species
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); Environmental Processes and Reviews – The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was passed under the Nixon Administration. It is a logical, public disclosure, decision making process that must be followed if we want to complete a project on the National Forest. In order to do almost any project, NEPA must be done at some level. The Forest Plan provides guidance on how to manage the Forest by management areas. There are approximately 20 different management areas. In order to have any project approved, it must be consistent with the Forest Plan. In considering possible RAC projects, the Forest Plan must be adhered to and NEPA must be completed.
The Pactola Project Area NEPA process is nearly completed. Prior to initiating any project, there must be a purpose and a need. The purpose and need for the Pactola Project is to reduce the spread of the Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB). The proposed action is to harvest and thin dense stands of large trees to slow the spread of the MPB. The Forest Service must perform scoping, where we take the proposed action public to possible affected parties for comments / feedback. Based upon the response received, further analysis will be completed and alternatives will be developed. These will be compiled into a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which is distributed to the parties that responded to the scoping efforts to give them the opportunity to comment. Comments received on the DEIS are considered and incorporated into the final EIS. There is a category of projects which can be covered by a much simpler NEPA process called a decision memo. Consideration for any project must be first be given to the law, the Forest Plan, impact to floodplains, wetlands and other resources, and possible disturbance to heritage (historic and prehistoric) sites. Basically, the Forest Service has a myriad of laws, regulations and processes to follow. If NEPA has already been completed, a RAC project will be much easier.
- Project Examples from other RAC's – Seven examples of project proposals from Lawrence and Custer County provided. These projects included Rehab Gravel and Custer Limestone (Road Maintenance); Restoration of Wetland Habitat; Water for Wildlife; Tinton Weed Management; Camp Bob Marshall Water System; and French Creek Willow Restoration. Project proposals do not necessarily have to be extremely complicated and detailed.
- Project Ideas and Discussion – Early thoughts and ideas for possible projects: Children's Urban Fishing Pond Enhancement; Spring Creek Watershed (sediment removal); Slash Haul Assistance (Federal funds to help private landowners mitigate bug tree removal – 50/50 cost share).
- Election of RAC Chair – postponed until May 17, 2011 meeting

Handouts – Custer and Lawrence County RAC Project Proposals, Updated RAC Member List, RAC Funds Spreadsheet, Grants and Agreements / Cost Share Information